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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000833

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SUBJECT: LIBERIA COMMITTEE CHAIR'S TRIP AND FUTURE OF
SANCTIONS

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador John R. Bolton,
Permanent Representative, for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Following her recent visit to Monrovia, the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN and Chairman of the Liberia Sanctions Committee Ellen Loj concluded the Security Council should send a positive signal to the new Liberian government during the Council's scheduled June review of sanctions. The Danish Mission to the UN reported that President Johnson-Sirleaf seemed resigned to a continuation of the diamond ban, but is working hard to meet the criteria to lift the timber ban by June. According to the Danish Mission, President Johnson-Sirleaf told Loj that she had no intention of requesting the de-listing of Edwin Snowe, Jewel Howard Taylor, or other notables on the sanctions list. But President Johnson-Sirleaf emphasized the need for more background on the listing justifications in order to strengthen her defense of the sanctions. Concerning the arms embargo, Chairman Loj prefers to wait until June to create an exemption for the Liberian Special Security Service (SSS), rather than to seek to pass a separate resolution now. Action request in para 7. END SUMMARY.

THE NEED FOR A POSITIVE SIGNAL

12. (C) A Danish Mission official met with USUN on April 18 to provide a readout of the April 6-9 visit to Monrovia by Liberia Committee Chairman and Danish PermRep Ellen Margrethe Loj. Chairman Loj was impressed with the professionalism and motivation of the new Liberian government, especially President Johnson-Sirleaf and Finance Minister Sayeh. The Danish Mission remarked that President Johnson-Sirleaf is using the timber and diamond criteria in the Security Council resolutions as benchmarks to help push forward reforms. Chairman Loj congratulated the Liberians on the progress made thus far and pressed them to continue needed reforms. The Danish Mission believes it will be important for the Security Council to send a positive signal to Liberia during the scheduled June review of sanctions. Such a signal would reward President Johnson-Sirleaf for the courageous steps already taken and would encourage her to continue to take the tough decisions needed to bring accountability and transparency to Liberia.

13. (C) According to the Danish Mission, President Johnson-Sirleaf seemed resigned to a continuation of the diamond ban after June, but was working hard to meet the criteria to lift the timber ban. The Danish Mission had several ideas for Security Council action in June. If the Liberians met the criteria for either timber or diamonds, the Council could lift the sanctions. If not, the Council could suspend the sanctions for a test period, or could extend the sanctions for only a short time. The Danes judge that any of these options would send a positive signal to Liberia without

compromising the criteria.

ASSET FREEZE AND TRAVEL BAN

14. (C) According to the Danish Mission, President Johnson-Sirleaf told Loj that she had no intention of requesting the de-listing of notables on the sanctions list. Although the continuation of sanctions against individuals like Edwin Snowe and Jewel Howard Taylor created political "complexities" for the new Liberian government, the Danish Mission reported that President Johnson-Sirleaf understood the necessity to keep them on the sanctions list. Nevertheless, President Johnson-Sirleaf asked Chairman Loj to provide her with more information on the listing justifications in order to bolster the new Liberian government's defense of the sanctions.

THE ARMS EMBARGO

15. (C) USUN explained the need to provide weapons to the Liberian Special Security Service (SSS), which Diplomatic Security (DS) is training to provide close protection for President Johnson-Sirleaf. Current resolutions imposing an arms embargo do not provide any suitable exemption to enable the SSS to procure weapons. The Danish Mission understood the concern and Chairman Loj had discussed the matter during her visit to Monrovia. Denmark prefers to address the issue when the Security Council reviews the sanctions in June (action is required by June 21). If DS prefers to conclude training the SSS by the beginning of June, thereby

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necessitating a Council exemption earlier, the Danish Chair suggested moving the Council's consideration of a new resolution to early June.

16. (C) The Danish told USUN they are reluctant to table a resolution to amend the arms embargo in April because they fear the resulting negotiations would open up a wider debate on sanctions, to include timber and diamonds, issues that President Johnson-Sirleaf prefers to address in June following her internal efforts. In addition, the Liberia Committee's Panel of Experts (PoE) is currently researching and writing its next report, due to be completed in May, which will include a section on the arms embargo. Finally, SRSB Doss told Chairman Loj that he doubted if the Liberian government could adequately secure and monitor new arms if the embargo were even partially lifted now.

ACTION REQUEST

17. (C) USUN requests Department guidance on how to proceed.
BOLTON